

Bris celebrated sixty years late

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TWO weeks ago 12 Yidden underwent Bris Mila in this West Siberian industrial city. Their ages ranged from eight months to 60 years, and they came from nearby towns — Omsk, Tomsk, Kemerova among others.

The *Brissos* were carried out by Mohelim Dr. M. Sifman and Dr. M. Harris, both of London, who undertook the journey specifically to take part in this great Mitzva.

Genadi, who at 60 years of age, was one of this Bris Mila group and received his new name of Gershon, related a particularly moving story.

A few weeks previously he was invited to join a Friday night *seudo*. The sight of the lit candles, challos and *becher* of wine brought him to tears. He explained that the last time he had seen this was over 50 years ago when he was a little boy. Each Friday night a group of

people would meet at his house in a room which he was not allowed to enter. On several occasions he caught a glimpse of the inside of the room. He saw a table covered with a white cloth, two lit candles, challos and wine. Its meaning was never explained to him, and now only 50 years later, he finally had the opportunity to have it all explained.

Genadi then went on to relate that as a child he remembered that his uncle had travelled with his newly born baby cousin, to find a mohel in Kazakhstan, a journey of almost one thousand miles, to perform the mitzva in secret.

After being assured that even though he was more than eight days old, and could still take part in the mitzva of Bris Mila, he gave some ancient silver coins of great value as a token of thanks. For many years he had treasured them dearly and they were the

most valuable of all his possessions, but now their value could not be compared to the great mitzva in which he had taken part. He was later presented with a pair of new tefillin which he now dons every day.

A *seudas mitzva* was held in the newly opened kehilla hall, and was attended by over 50 people. The President of the kehilla addressed the gathering, and said how proud and moved he was to host such a wonderful event.

Later Dr. Sifman gave a lecture on Jewish ethics to a large number of Jewish doctors and students. They were amazed to meet qualified doctors who lead full Jewish lives. The lecture made a great impact on the audience.

The *Brissos*, *Seudo* and lecture were all arranged by Rabbi Yehuda Weissler, Chief Rabbi of Novosibirsk.